

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliot Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#1)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 1:

Has the Administration increased troop deployments to countries, including Colombia, neighboring Venezuela at any point in the last month?

Answer 1:

No. Other than personnel required to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Colombia, I am not aware of any increased troop deployments to the countries neighboring Venezuela. I refer you to the Department of Defense for additional information and or details.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliot Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#2)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 2:

Are there currently any plans to or discussions about moving additional combat troops to Colombia or any other country that neighbors Venezuela?

Answer 2:

I am not aware of any plans or discussions about moving combat troops to Colombia or any other country that neighbors Venezuela.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliot Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#3)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 3:

Is anyone at the White House, National Security Council, Department of Defense or any other agency making plans for U.S. military engagement in Venezuela?

Answer 3:

I am not aware of any non-routine planning (at the White House, National Security Council, Department of Defense, or any other agency) for U.S. military engagement in Venezuela.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliot Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#4)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 4:

Will you pledge that the Trump Administration will not take any military action regarding Venezuela without consulting with Congress in accordance with the War Powers Act?

Answer 4:

The United States remains resolute in supporting a peaceful transition to democracy and freedom in Venezuela.

As the president has said, all options remain on the table. At the State Department, we are focused on deploying all of our diplomatic and economic capabilities to support Interim President Guaidó and the National Assembly in a peaceful transition to democracy and freedom in Venezuela.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#5)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 5:

What is the Administration's long-term strategy for Venezuela?

Answer 5:

Venezuela is a close neighbor and was once a thriving democracy. Our policy is to support a peaceful democratic transition as outlined by interim President Juan Guaidó – end the usurpation by Nicolas Maduro, allow for a period of transition, and hold free and fair elections. Our long-term strategy is to work with civil society, the business community, and others in Venezuela to assist and build up democratic institutions and the economy.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#6)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 6:

What planning is in place if the situation in the country further deteriorates, possibly even toward civil war?

Answer 6:

Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis is a threat to U.S. national interests and regional stability. The Department is using all diplomatic tools within our power and working with our partners to help the Venezuelan people and their neighbors seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis. All of our current actions are designed to avert violence and civil strife.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#7)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 7:

What is the contingency plan if Maduro clings to power?

Answer 7:

The Venezuelan people have already begun their nation's transition to democracy, and the region and the world support them. More than 50 countries recognize interim President Guaidó and support Venezuela's legitimately-elected National Assembly as they lay the foundations for a transitional government and free and fair elections. The Department is working closely with the international community to continue to support the Venezuelan people and regional and global efforts to ensure that this democratic transition takes place quickly and peacefully.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#8)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 8:

What kind of preparation is the Administration doing for what happens when and if Maduro steps aside?

Answer 8:

Maduro's departure is a first step in Venezuela's road to recovery. The Department is collaborating with the international community to support the interim government and the legitimately-elected National Assembly as they lay the groundwork for free and fair elections and address humanitarian, security, governance, and economic recovery.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#9)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 9:

What would the United States role be in supporting a democratic transition, rebuilding Venezuela, and supporting long-term stability?

Answer 9:

Venezuela's need for humanitarian assistance will continue in the short term, coupled with assistance in the security, governance, and economic sectors. The Department is collaborating with the international community and multilateral partners and organizations to ensure Venezuela's interim government will have the support it needs to organize elections that are truly free and fair and begin steps to rebuild Venezuela.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliot Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#10)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 10:

The Administration has attempted to slash budgets for development assistance and humanitarian aid – how do you plan to fund the support needed to rebuild Venezuela?

Answer 10:

President Trump has made it very clear that U.S. assistance is allocated to meet U.S. priorities. The United States strongly supports the legitimate government of interim President Guaidó and has answered his call for humanitarian help. On January 24, Secretary Pompeo announced the United States was ready to provide more than \$20 million in initial humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela. To date, the United States has provided more than \$140 million, including nearly \$97 million in humanitarian assistance and approximately \$43 million in development and economic assistance. We have also asked Congress to appropriate for up to \$500 million to help restore the Venezuelan economy. We are constantly assessing the needs of Venezuela and Venezuelans and are prepared to provide help where help is needed most as Venezuela rebuilds itself, now and into the future.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#11)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 11:

Have any lessons from the intervention in Libya been taken into consideration?

Answer 11:

The safety and security of American citizens, including Department personnel, is our utmost concern everywhere around the world and we are taking all necessary precautions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#12)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 12:

What precautions are being taken to ensure the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel in Venezuela?

Answer 12:

The U.S. Department of State has no greater responsibility than the protection of the members of our diplomatic corps, particularly those stationed overseas. On March 14, all U.S. diplomats remaining in Venezuela departed the country. U.S. diplomats will now continue that mission from other locations where they will continue to help manage the flow of humanitarian assistance to the Venezuelan people and support the democratic actors bravely resisting tyranny.

The United States government, at all levels, remains firm in its resolve and support for the people of Venezuela and Interim President Juan Guaidó. We look forward to resuming our presence once the transition to democracy begins.

In addition, we have advised that U.S. citizens should not travel to Venezuela. U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Venezuela should strongly consider departing Venezuela. Commercial flights continue to operate.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliot Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#13)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 13:

Could you tell me how many Venezuelan refugees the United States admitted last year? The year before?

Answer 13:

In FY 2017, USCIS received 27,640 applications for asylum from Venezuelans in the United States; it approved about 72% of the applications it completed in FY 2017, some of which might have been received in previous fiscal years. In FY 2018, USCIS received 28,447 applications for asylum from Venezuelans in the United States; it approved about 44% of the applications it completed in FY 2018, some of which might have been received in previous fiscal years. At present, USCIS has 74,009 asylum cases pending from Venezuelans in the United States. (Note these figures count cases; each case could include several individuals. Also, these figures do not include cases handled in the Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review immigration court system.) No Venezuelans were admitted into the United States via the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program in 2017 or 2018.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliot Abrams
Representative David N. Cicilline (#14)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 14:

How many Venezuelans applied for asylum in the United States in 2018? And how many were granted asylum?

Answer 14:

In FY 2018, USCIS received asylum applications from 28,447 Venezuelans in the United States. USCIS processed 7,787 applications (some of which might have been received in previous fiscal years), of which 44% were approved. As of January 31, 2019, USCIS has 74,009 affirmative asylum cases pending adjudication from Venezuelans in the United States. (Note these figures count cases; each case could include several individuals. Also, these figures do not include cases handled in the Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review immigration court system.)

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#15)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 15:

Do you find it at all contradictory that as you thank Venezuela's neighbors for their generosity in opening their doors, President Trump wants to build a wall to keep these same people out?

Answer 15:

The United States is compassionate towards the Venezuelan people and aim to ease their suffering, which is why we continue to carry out robust humanitarian assistance programs for the Venezuelan people. The United States has, to date, provided more than \$140 million, including nearly \$97 million in humanitarian assistance and approximately \$43 million in development and economic assistance for Venezuelans who have fled their homes due to the brutal repression of the illegitimate Maduro regime.

For further questions on this matter, I refer you to the White House and Department of Homeland Security.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Special Representative Elliott Abrams
Representative David Cicilline (#16)
House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 13, 2019**

Question 16:

Is the Administration considering granting Temporary Protected Status to Venezuelans living in the United States?

Answer 16:

We continue to assess conditions in Venezuela and will calibrate our response as conditions warrant. The issues you raise are under careful consideration in the administration.